WORKERS HAMMER 4
SUPPLEMENT April 2025

Save Birmingham – Kick out the commissioners!

Escalate the bin strike!

The heroic Birmingham bin strikers are fighting against the odds. The strikers, who are organised by Unite, have shown tremendous determination to beat back the city council's threat to slash the wages of 150 workers by as much as £8000 pa. Union members courageously rejected an offer that included significant pay cuts and would eliminate the role of Waste Recycling and Collection Officer, a key demand of the employers which would lead to downgrading of jobs and huge wage cuts. At the same time, the strike is being undermined. Refuse is being collected using council vehicles that are operated by non-union labour and picket lines are being moved aside by the police. The truth is, despite their courage and determination, if the bin strikers remain isolated from the rest of the city's workforce, they will be defeated.

Birmingham council, the largest local authority in Europe, was bankrupted by 15 years of funding cuts by Westminster. Since 2023 the council has been under the boot of parasitic commissioners who suck £1k a day (!) out of public funds to inflict an unprecedented level of austerity on the city's working class. These government-appointed dictators have immense powers to override council decisions and impose savage cuts to council services. Birmingham's chief commissioner Max 'the axe' Caller's past record includes completely abolishing Northamptonshire council and aggressively forcing drastic cuts to council budgets. In Birmingham, the council tax was jacked up by 21% over two years while services are being gutted. Libraries and swimming pools are to close; social care services for children, the elderly, disabled and homeless are being slashed and ***hundreds of council jobs*** are on the chopping block.

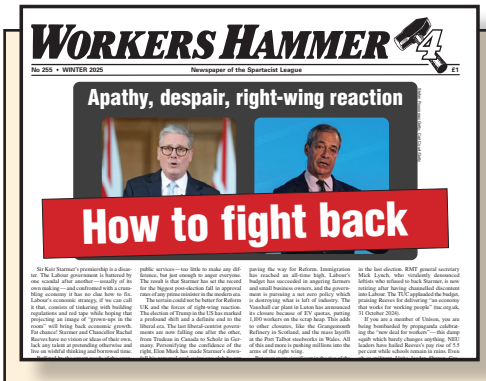
The bin strike is a battle for the whole of the working class in Birmingham who are on the receiving end of these devastating cuts to social services. A united struggle by the city's unions to throw out the commissioners would deal a blow against the anti-working-class Starmer government, which backs these commissioners in their efforts to bleed the city dry. Birmingham workers have the power to drive out these council slayers. ***To prevent the bin strike going down to defeat, the union leadership must change course***. The strikers must not be left to fight alone. Mobilise the power of the Birmingham trade union movement city-wide to ***strike*** alongside the bin workers! Birmingham City Council is one of the biggest employers in the area. Strikers should send delegations to the unions representing ***all*** council workers and motivate them to join the strike. Likewise, strikers should appeal to Unite branches across the city, in bus garages and factories, to exercise their social power in defence of the trade union movement in the city.

Don't let this strike go down to defeat!

What's needed:

1. Strike the city! All Birmingham City Council workers across all departments should join the strike. Call out Unite members in Birmingham buses and factories.
2. Stop the scabbing! Build mass picket lines that no one crosses! Agency workers: join the union and support the strike!
3. ***Save Birmingham from the rats: drive the commissioners out of the city!***

—23 April 2025



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